

R E M A R K S

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

THE SPECIFICATION

The specification has been amended at page 4 to refer to reference numeral 220 shown in Fig. 3, and the specification has been amended at pages 12-13 to make a grammatical improvement. No new matter has been added, and it is respectfully requested that the amendments to the specification be approved and entered.

THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 has been amended to clarify the feature of the present invention whereby the second step is performed immediately after the first step, as supported by the disclosure in the specification at, for example, page 21, lines 11 and 12.

In addition, claim 1 has been amended to clarify the feature of the present invention whereby the code coat is formed to completely cover the code on the printing medium, as supported by the disclosure in the specification at, for example, page 21, lines 12-20.

Still further, claim 1 has been amended to avoid using the term "means" and claim 3 has been amended to correct a minor

antecedent basis problem and to make some minor grammatical improvements.

Yet still further, new independent claim 6 has been added to more explicitly recite the feature of the present invention whereby the code coat is formed to completely cover the code on the printing medium by printing the second ink over an area larger than an area of the code, as supported by the disclosure in the specification at, for example, page 21, lines 12-20.

No new matter has been added, and it is respectfully requested that the amendments to the claims be approved and entered.

THE PRIOR ART REJECTION

Claims 1-4 were rejected under 35 USC 102 as being anticipated by JP 11-263062 ("Saito et al"). This rejection, however, is respectfully traversed with respect to the claims as amended hereinabove.

As pointed out in the Response filed on March 8, 2006, and as explained in the Background of the Invention section of the present application, JP 11-263062 ("Saito et al") discloses two possible procedures for avoiding offset doubling. First, as shown in prior art Fig. 6 of the present application, Saito et al discloses waiting to print the code (K2 plate) until last.

Alternatively, as shown in prior art Fig. 7 of the present application, Saito et al discloses first printing the code with the K2 plate, then allowing the plate to dry, and then printing characters, lines and color image data. However, as pointed out in the Response filed on March 8, 2006, and explained in the Background of the Invention section of the present application, with the first technique of Saito et al, problems are encountered in which the codes cannot be printed properly, while the second technique of Saito et al requires an extra step of drying the code, thereby increasing the cost of printing.

On page 2 of the Final Office Action, the Examiner asserts that the Y printing of the yellow ink in Saito et al (as shown in prior art Fig. 7 of the present application) may be considered to correspond to the second step of forming a code coat covering the code as according to the claimed present invention.

It is respectfully pointed out, however, that according to the present invention as recited in amended independent claim 1 and new independent claim 6, the second step of forming the code coat covering the code is performed immediately after the first step of printing the code. Thus, according to amended independent claim 1 and new independent claim 6, an extra intermediate step of drying (as in Saito et al) is avoided.

Significantly, even without providing a drying step, the method of the claimed present invention is able to effectively print the code and the code coat while avoiding the problem of offset doubling because according to the present invention as recited in amended independent claims 1 and 6 the code coat is formed to completely cover the code on the printing medium.

More specifically, as explained with respect to Fig. 3 in the Background of the Invention, a plurality of printing units (e.g., 200 and 210 in Fig. 3) are provided in a color printing machine. After dots 105 are printed on the sheet of paper 300 at the printing unit 200, the sheet of paper 300 proceeds to the next printing unit 210 for an image other than the dots 105 to be printed on the paper 300. Conventionally, the dots 105, which are not yet dried when they reach the printing unit 210, are trapped by the blanket cylinder 211 of the printing unit 210 and the dots 220 trapped on the blanket cylinder 211 are then printed back onto a next sheet 300 as dots 107 that are offset from the dots 105 (see the right side of Fig. 3). Due to this phenomenon, offset doubling of dots 105 and dots 107, which are offset by a distance d , occurs as shown in Fig. 2.

By contrast, according to the present invention, as shown in Fig. 11, the dots 3 of the dot code 1 are printed on the sheet of paper 7 at the first printing unit 7, and the code coat 5 is

printed by the second unit 20 immediately thereafter so as to completely cover dots 3, as shown at the right side of Fig. 11. Since, according to the claimed present invention, the code coat 5 completely covers the dot code 1 (dots 3), the dots 3 are never brought into direct contact with the blanket cylinder 21 of the second printing unit 20. Therefore, there is no opportunity for the blanket cylinder 21 to pick up part of the dots 3, and offset doubling can be avoided.

It is respectfully submitted that Saito et al clearly does not disclose, teach or suggest forming a code coat immediately after printing a dot code so as to completely cover the code, as according to the present invention as recited in amended independent claim 1 and new independent claim 6.

In addition, it is respectfully submitted that Saito et al also clearly does not disclose, teach or suggest forming the code coat completely covering the code over an area larger than an area of the code, as according to the present invention as recited in new independent claim 6.

In summary, it is respectfully submitted that Saito et al merely discloses printing a code with a K2 plate, then allowing the plate to dry, and then printing characters, lines and color image data over the printed and dried code, and that Saito et al does not at all disclose, teach or suggest the features of the

present invention as recited in amended independent claim 1 whereby a code coat is printed immediately after the first step of printing the code so as to completely cover the code, or the feature of the present invention as recited in amended independent claim 6 whereby the code coat is completely covering the code over an area larger than an area of the code.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present invention as recited in amended independent claim 1, new independent claim 6, and claims 2-4 depending from claim 1, clearly patentably distinguishes over Saito et al, under 35 USC 102 as well as under 35 USC 103.

Entry of this Amendment, allowance of the claims and the passing of this application to issue are respectfully solicited.

If the Examiner has any comments, questions, objections or recommendations, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned for prompt action.

Respectfully submitted,

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